

LING 100
Introduction to Linguistics

Syllabus

Fall 2008
MR 1:10–2:25pm, Griffin 7

instructor: Prof. Nathan Sanders office: NAB 255
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AIM: NathanSanders hours: MT 3–5pm,
and by appointment

Course Description

From the course catalog:

This course provides a general introduction to the scientific study of language by means of systematic exploration of the inherent similarities and surprising differences across human languages. Using actual data from real languages, students will learn the basic methodology, important results, and major theoretical debates from various subfields of linguistics, including phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, language change, and sociolinguistics. Additional topics may include sign languages, language acquisition, the politics of language, and animal communication. Format: lecture/discussion. No prerequisites. Enrollment limit: 40 (expected: 40).

The course website is located at: <http://wso.williams.edu/~nsanders/LING100/>

This course is cross-listed as Anthropology 107.

Readings

William O’Grady, John Archibald, Mark Aronoff, and Janie Rees-Miller. 2005. *Contemporary Linguistics: An Introduction*. 5th ed. St. Martin’s Press. ISBN #0312247389.

Earlier editions of *Contemporary Linguistics* may be cheaper and easier to find, and they are suitable for use in the course, though you may have to make some adjustments when using the older books for certain topics.

A few supplementary readings will also be available from time to time, listed on the Supplemental Readings webpage located at:

<http://wso.williams.edu/~nsanders/LING100/readings.html>

Grading

Your grade for the course is calculated as a weighted combination of your class participation (5%), homework average (25%), midterm exam score (30%), and final exam score (40%).

Homework

Homework is generally assigned on a Monday and due the following Monday, so you should usually have a full week to work on it. Homework is available from the course website, so missing lecture is not an excuse for skipping homework. Homework is due at the beginning of class since solutions are often discussed in lecture. For this reason, late homework cannot be accepted. To compensate for this strict policy, your lowest homework grade is dropped when computing your final grade.

You are encouraged to work together in groups, but in accordance with the Williams College Honor Code, you must write up your own solutions, in your own words, listing the names of all students you consulted with. Suspected violations will be pursued to the full extent of College policy!

Your homework should be either neatly written or typed in a reasonable font with reasonable spacing and margins for writing comments (e.g., 10–12pt font, double-spaced prose, 1–1.5” margins, using only one side of the page). Please, do not submit spiral-bound paper with ragged edges! Staple (rather than paper clip or fold) multiple pages together. Be sure to put your name on every page in case they get separated.

Exams

There are two exams: a midterm and a final. The midterm covers material from the first half of the course. It is an in-class exam, designed to take the full class time to complete. The final exam is longer (two to three hours) and more comprehensive, covering material from the entire course, with a focus on material covered after the midterm. Both exams are open-book, open-note, and in accordance with the Honor Code, you must do your own work on these exams without the help of any other student. Suspected violations will be pursued to the full extent of College policy!

Tentative Schedule

Sept. 4	R	Ch.1		human language, generative linguistics, grammaticality, competence, performance
8	M	Ch.2.1–2.5		human vocal tract, English consonants, HW#1 assigned
11	R	Ch.2.6–2.9		English vowels, stress
15	M	Ch.2.10	HW#1 due	non-English sounds, HW#2 assigned
18	R	Ch.3.1–3.3, Carney		phonemes, allophones
22	M	Ch.3.4	HW#2 due	distinctive features, HW#3 assigned
25	R	Ch.3.5		syllable structure
29	M	Ch.3.6	HW#3 due	rules, HW#4 assigned
Oct. 2	R			rules (cont'd)
6	M	Ch.4.1–4.5, Bauer	HW#4 due	word structure, HW#5 assigned
9	R	Ch.4.6		allomorphy, morphophonology
13	M			— <i>reading period, no class</i> —
16	R		HW#5 due	MIDTERM
20	M	Ch.5.1		categories, phrase structure, HW#6 assigned
23	R			phrase structure (cont'd)
27	M	Ch.5.2	HW#6 due	subcategorization, HW#7 assigned
30	R	Ch.5.3, DeGregory		transformations
Nov. 3	M	Ch.6.1	HW#7 due	literal meaning, compositionality, HW#8 assigned
6	R	Ch.6.4		non-literal meaning, pragmatics
10	M	Ch.7.1–7.2	HW#8 due	language change, HW#9 assigned
13	R	Ch.7.6, Ch.8.3, Trudgill		comparative linguistics, language families
17	M	Ch.10	HW#9 due	American Sign Language
20	R	Ch.15		dialects, HW#10 assigned
24	M	Nunberg, Pullum		“Ebonics”
27	R			— <i>Thanksgiving, no class</i> —
Dec. 1	M	TBA		TBA
4	R	TBA	HW#10 due	TBA
TBA				FINAL EXAM time/location TBA